

E- BOOKING TRENDS IN TOURISM SECTOR OF THE TOURIST FROM PUNE CITY, MAHARSHTRA, INDIA

Dr. Bharat.S. Vhankate*

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Pune is the Maharashtra's cultural and education hub. Later on it acquired identity of industrial and software destination. Due to such importance, both inbound and outbound tourism has increased to the greater extent. Punites make good use of internet for booking their tourism products. In order to meet this demand, various tourism service providers, agents etc. are using net for various reasons such as advertising, booking etc. It has resulted in an exponential growth in the tourism sector. The present article is an attempt to provide the current status of e-booking and also take a feel of the future for e- booking trend in the travel and tourism sector from Pune city.

KEYWORDS: E- Booking, Tourism, Tourism Sector, Online/ E-booking Platforms.

Introduction

Indian tourism is one of the fastest tourism growing industry in the world, 6.1% contributing to the Gross National Product (GNP), providing employment to 27 million people, 5.7% to the total employment to 27 million people, 5.7% to the total employment of the country. Considering such importance, the central as well as state governments are aiming at positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth. In order to accelerate the growth of tourism, the Ministry of Tourism grants recognition to travel agents, tour operators, tour agents etc. As a result of such efforts at governmental and private level, both domestic and foreign tourists are ever increasing. About 88.90 lakh foreign tourists arrived in India, in the year 2016, and the tourists' turnover counted to 80.27 lakh in 2015, recording a growth of 10.70%. Due to such robust growth, foreign exchange earnings from tourism during January - December – 2016 were Rs. 1,55,650/- crore, with a growth of 15.1% as compared Rs. 1,35,193/- in 2015.

Objectives

The major objectives of this article are:

- To study an overview of Indian and International status of tourism e-booking;
- To know and discuss the online booking trend and perception of tourists in Pune; and
- To understand the prospects of this sector.

Research Methodology

The required data has been collected from both the sources that are secondary as well as primary data. In order to collect secondary data, various websites providing details about online booking trends, governmental and world tourism, has been used. The research has collected primary data in the form questionnaire, duly filled in from the respondents of Pune city. In order to collect the said data, the researcher, prepared the questionnaire and distributed through an email, whatsapp in 'Google Form' and in physical form. The details are as follows:

* Head, Ph.D. Research Centre and Vice - Principal, MES Garware College of Commerce, Karve Road, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Sr. No	Questionnaire Circulated in Form of	Circulated	Received	Correct
1	Online Google form	176	33	33
2	Email	211	28	26
3	Physical – in print form	100	57	51
Total		487	118	110

Status of Online Tourism Booking

It can be seen that mobile phone is becoming a key contributor in the online shopping space. Currently around 30% of total shopping queries in India are coming from mobile phones from the total E-Commerce business. In 2013, the travel account for 71% of E-Commerce business in India. Following are the key points in this respect:

- Most of the travelers do online research and prefer online ticket booking. For tour and hotel packages they prefer to book through the off line agencies.
- Since there are lucrative offers and attractive deals, 36% of the actual travelers make unplanned trips to avail the discount facilities.
- Social media affects in total 48% purchase decision of the travelers.

Trends in Travel Industries for E- Booking

In order to attract more and more customers to online portals, online travel agents are providing following offers:

- User-friendly interface for easier navigation and better interactivity.
- Testimonials of the experienced travelers are provided on the internet to share the level of satisfaction and to increase the creditability of such portal.
- Offer gifts vouchers, discount, cash back offers, various tailor made attractive tour packages at lucrative prices to attract new travelers.
- Development and offering of user-friendly apps which can complete the internet search, book the product and make the payment without any intervention.

Reasons for Growth in Online Travel Booking

Following reasons can be identified for the growth of the online travel booking industry:

- Increase in use of electronic devices with net connectivity for example, laptop, smart phones, tabs etc. In the year 2011 there were 20 million mobile user in India as compared to that of in 2015, this figure touched to 171 million mobile posing almost 8 times more growth in the industry out of that almost 76% of mobile users use the mobile with internet for their routine use. It is also seen that 70% of net traffics comes via mobile internet. On an average internet mobile user spent almost 3 hours a day on mobile.
- Increase in Spectrums.
- Attractive websites and promotional materials.
- Quick and easy booking / cancellation facilities.
- Easy online payment and refund facilities.
- High disposable income with the individuals.
- Offering exclusive product on the online platform only, for example OLA, Amazon, etc.

Observations and Interpretation of the Data Collected

On the basis of the data collected and analysis of the same, following observations and interpretations can be drawn:

- Profile of the Respondents In total, the researcher has received 110 responses in correct form. On the analysis of the same, it can be seen that there are 60 males and 50 female respondents. Graduate 75, Post Graduate 25 and professionals are 10. Their occupation can be seen as 86 are taking education, 15 are doing job, 04 are doing business and profession each, where as one respondent is either retired or is a homemaker. So the perception of male members, in the age group of 15-25, graduate respondents, who are taking education, will be decisive one.
- From the responses of the respondents, it can be observed that, 56 tourists have responded as they go on tour in six months to one year. The lowest responses are for more than one year. It is more interesting to know that almost 99% of the tourist goes on a tour at least once a year. It

indicates that, if more convenience and tourist's attractions are provided, frequency of tour of tourists can be increased.

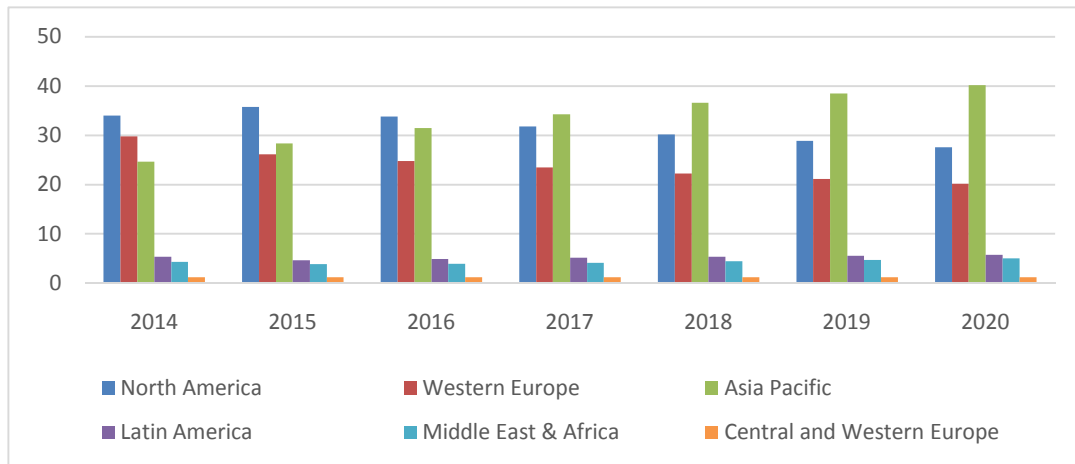
- In response to the purpose of tour, 90 tourists that is around 81% of tourists go for a pleasure trip.
- As a mode of transport, highest, that is 66 tourists have responded that they travel by air, followed by railway, the respondents are 22 in this category. Thus it may be perceived that, majority of the tourist do not travel by road.
- As many as 86 tourists buy their transport option through online platform. Rest 13 and 11 tourists buy their requirement through an agent and directly from company or vendor respectively. So, significant number of tourist chooses the internet option.
- In order to stay at tourism destination, maximum, that is 88 tourist book hotels, while 15 book guest houses and rest that is 07 tourists choose other options.
- The responses show that, 95 tourists, with 87% book their accommodation option through online travel agent.
- In this section, the researcher has tried to understand the reasons, why tourists opt for online booking option. In order to understand these reasons, he asked following questions in five point scale namely – strongly agree, agree can't say, disagree and strongly disagree, and recorded their responses, as mentioned below:
 - 62 and 33 tourists have responded as strongly agree and agree respectively, to the statement that the tourists can book, cancel and alter the booking 24/7 through the online mode.
 - In all 106 tourists feel that they can view lot of options, compare them and then they can take a suitable decision.
 - 55 tourists reply as strongly agree and 40 tourists say as agree, to the statement that they can skip many middleman and as a result of it, they can save more on the online booking.
 - 52 and 50 tourists respond as strongly agree and agree respectively to the statement saying that the internet provides variety of discounts and concessions in price of the tourism product.
 - Majority, that is 95 tourists feel that, internet helps them in completing all sorts of booking facilities in one go. It saves a lot of time and reduces the anxiety.
 - 74 tourists feel that yes, it is absolutely possible to book all the requirement by sitting at place and hence respond as strongly agree and 23 respondents respond as agree. If both figures taken together, the percentage of favorable responses goes up to 90%. Since significant numbers of respondents are in favor of the statement, we can say that the statement holds true.
 - 45 tourists say strongly agree and 48 respond as agree and endorse the statement which says that due to online booking each tourist across the globe get access to same facilities without any kind of discrimination.
 - Reading and watching the reviews helps a tourist takes decision about his tour. 51 tourists say strongly agree, whereas 47 tourists say agree and respond that, such feedback helps a lot in their booking process.
 - As many as 56 tourist reply as strongly agree and 41 as agree and feel that it is possible to see attractive promotional material and to take suitable decision about the tourism.
 - Due to strong net connectivity, it is possible that all the transactions can be completed in one go and confirmation of the same is also received in no time. 67 and 33 tourists believe in the statement and say strongly agree and agree respectively.
- 103 respondents with 95% of the total respondents reply that for next booking, they would they would go for e-booking. It can be perceived from this response that maximum number of tourist would take help of online platform, instead of actual agents. So, there is a good scope to online agent to provide more booking options and attract more and more tourist.
- The researcher tried to understand the names of the online platforms that the tourist would be using for their next booking. The response shows that 70 tourists with 63% of total respondents would prefer to book with the help of MakeMyTrip, whereas Trivago would be the choice of 12 respondents. The Lowest responses that 6 tourist have responded as Yatra.

Key Predictions of Indian Travel Market by 2020

- Air travel to grow 15%, touching \$30 Billion US Dollar.
- Hotel industry to reach \$13 Billion US Dollar.
- 1/3 of every booking will be done by online booking platform.

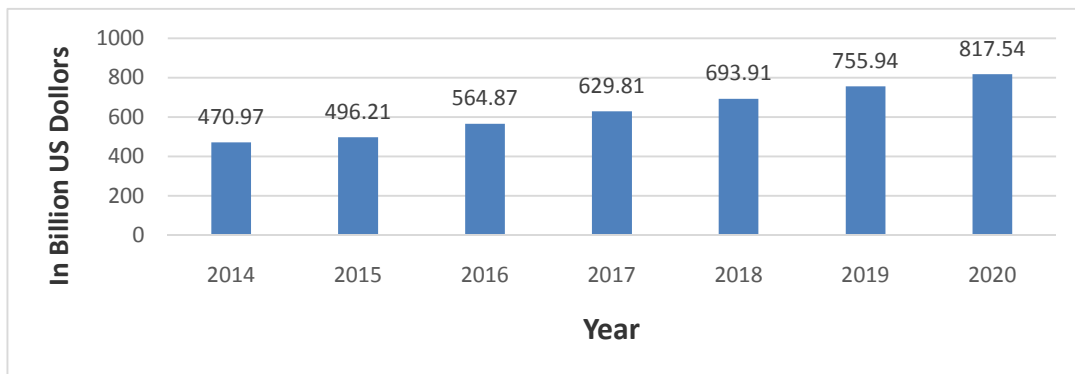
Following Two Charts will Try to Illustrate the Trend of E-travel Booking and Growth by 2020

Chart 1: Distribution of Digital Travels Sales Worldwide for 2014 to 2020 by Regions



(Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/499760/forecast-of-online-travel-sales-share-by-region/>)

Chart 2: Digital Travel Sales Worldwide for 2014 to 2020 in Billion US Dollar



(Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/499694/forecast-of-online-travel-sales-worldwide/>)

In both the above charts, it can be witnessed that, there is firm and upward growth in online sales of travel products. Considering the development in the technology, tech comfort of the travelers, and easy availability of the tools – equipments etc., making it very convenient to go for online travel booking. It can also be seen, especially in the second chart that there is an expected rise of almost 20% from 2018 to 2020, in merely two years, at the global level.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be stated that the tourists from Pune are shifting to internet option to book their travel and tourism requirements. The reasons which they have posted are various benefits of net and mobile technology. The behavior of the Punites can be seen in line with the global tourists. In order to satisfy this demand, we may witness number of innovative options and products in times to come. So the potential in the e-booking of tourism product is very bright.

References

- ✎ India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2015: <http://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/Other/India%20Tourism%20Book%20English.pdf>
- ✎ Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2017: <http://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/Other/english%20India%20Tourism%20Statistics%202017.pdf>
- ✎ Ministry of Programme Implementation: <http://www.mospi.gov.in/statistical-year-book-india/2016/195>
- ✎ Ministry of Tourism: <http://tourism.gov.in/market-research-and-statistics>
- ✎ Statista: The Statistics Portal: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/499760/forecast-of-online-travel-sales-share-by-region/>
- ✎ Statista: The Statistics Portal: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/499694/forecast-of-online-travel-sales-worldwide/>
- ✎ Travel Biz Monitor: <http://www.travelbizmonitor.com/Data-Analysis/india-tourism-statistics-at-a-glance-2017-34480>.

